

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000838

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/OP/NEA
LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NORMALCY RETURNS AFTER FIVE-DAY STRIKE; MAOISTS
DECLARE STRIKE A SUCCESS, CRITICIZE U.S.

REFS: A) KATHMANDU 828, B) KATHMANDU 813, C) KATHMANDU 804

11. (SBU) Summary. Normalcy returned to Nepal's capital April 28 after a five-day general strike called by Maoist insurgents ended the day before. On the strike's last day scattered violent incidents were reported in the Kathmandu Valley, including the deaths of three Maoists who had tried to stop traffic on a suburban road. Also on April 27, in Khotang district after at least 12 Maoists were killed in an encounter with security forces, the insurgents retaliated by attacking an airport tower in the district. In three recent statements, Maoist leaders Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai declared the general strike a success; complained of the bounty put on the heads of Maoist leaders; and criticized U.S. and foreign involvement in Nepal. End Summary.

Strike Over, Normalcy Returns

12. (U) Life returned to normal in Kathmandu April 28 after a five-day Maoist-declared general strike shut down many businesses and nearly all long-distance transport April 23-27. Many larger stores in the capital opened tentatively April 27, although traffic remained light. According to media reports, in Kathmandu a few scattered attacks on vehicles occurred and two bombs were defused by police. Three Maoists were killed after they tried to block traffic on a road south-west of the capital, a Defense Ministry press release said.

Maoists Retaliate by Destroying Airport Tower

13. (SBU) On April 27, the last day of the general strike, "at least 12" Maoists died in clashes with security forces in Khotang district, about 90 miles southeast of Kathmandu, according to a Defense Ministry press release. The 12 Maoists were killed after they encountered security forces on a remote trail four hours walk east of the district headquarters. Initial news reports stated that 22 Maoists died in the operation; the exact number of casualties is unknown. Maoists retaliated by destroying the airport tower at Lamidanda in Khotang during the early morning hours of April 29. A team of civil air officials who inspected the site confirmed the incident to a Kathmandu journalist.

New Maoist Press Releases Criticize Bounty, U.S.

14. (SBU) In press releases dated April 25 and April 27, Maoist leaders Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai complained about the government's offer of a reward for top Maoist leaders and U.S. involvement in Nepal. Prachanda's April 25 statement accused Nepal's leaders of plotting "to hand over the entire country to the American imperialists," and asserted that the government's offer of a reward for Maoist leaders "will never be successful."

Maoists Declare Strike "Success"

15. (SBU) In an April 27 statement, Baburam Bhattarai, writing as "Coordinator, United Revolutionary People's Council, Nepal," thanked all those who made the April 23-27 general strike a "grand success." Bhattarai also complained about Nepal's leaders offering a reward for high-level Maoists, and "trying to invite foreign powers along with America for military intervention causing great danger to the country's sovereignty. In his own April 27 statement, Prachanda also labeled the general strike as "successful" and criticized the government's plans to involve "foreign devils" in its struggle with the insurgents.

16. (U) Post obtained Nepali-language versions of the Maoist leaders' three statements late in the day April 29. Post will send its own full translations to SA/INS April 30.

Comment

17. (SBU) That the Maoist general strike was not a clear success was obvious to all Nepalese, Maoist assertions to the contrary not withstanding. Scattered acts of Maoist violence did not succeed in cowing most urbanites, and the strike was widely flaunted in most cities and the larger towns. The Maoists now refer to the U.S. and other unspecified foreign powers with increasing frequency. However, in their statements the Maoists seem to take at least as much umbrage to the prices put on their heads as to reports of U.S. involvement. With another Maoist-declared strike behind them, many Nepalese have already begun to hear rumors of the next strike.

MALINOWSKI